

Unexpected Consequences by nerdsarehot75

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Hopper always comes to Joyce's rescue

Unexpected Consequences

"I just need a little more time," Joyce said.

"Joyce, we've been giving you more time. We've been lenient but we need your rent. If you can't pay it we're going to have to ask you to move out," Jared, the realtor she rented her house from, said.

"You're evicting me?" she asked, more numb than shocked.

"After your son there was a lot of damage. We didn't want to push the point. We understand he's still in the hospital?" he said.

"Where am I meant to go?" she asked.

"I'm sure there's someone who can help you. We're going to need you out by the weekend." He stood from the table, making to usher her out of the room.

"Just one more week. With Donald cutting my hours and Will's medical bills it's been a little slow. I'll have the money in a week," she said, a note of hysteria rising in her voice.

"You've been saying that for the last three weeks. We really must ask you to leave," he replied.

She stood from the chair, shaking. She walked out of the realtor's office, not taking notice of anyone else on the street. She got into her car and sat, staring out the windscreen, tears beginning to collect in her eyes.

She slammed her hands on the steering wheel, ignoring the looks of strangers walking past. What was she going to do? She couldn't send the boys to live with their father. She wasn't going to let them go too far from her for a while.

A knock on the window startled her so much she let out a scream. Seeing the worried face of Hopper looking in at her she let out a long breath. She opened the door and climbed out, trying to hide her emotional state.

"Joyce, what's wrong? Someone called saying you were sitting in your car on the verge of a breakdown. Is it Will?" he asked, hurriedly checking her over.

"What? No, everything's fine, Hop," she replied. She turned her face away from him, hoping he wouldn't notice the few tears still clinging to her eyelashes. He took her chin in his hand and turned her back to him.

"What's wrong?" he asked again.

"Nothing. I'm taking care of it."

"Why are you outside the realtors?" he questioned.

"Nothing. Just had a place to park here, that's all," she replied, pushing him away from her.

"Did they call you in for a meeting?" he asked.

"Why would you ask that?" She crossed her arms across her chest.

"Joyce, what happened?"

"Nothing, I keep telling you."

"Did they evict you?"

Instead of answering a few more tears fell from her eyes. His heart clenched and he pulled her in for a hug.

"Where are you going to go?" he asked.

She shook her head and a gasping sob left her mouth. His arms tightened and he buried his nose in her hair.

"You'll stay with me," he said.

"No, Hop, you don't have to," she replied, pulling away from the hug.

"I have enough room and you have your kids to consider. It'll just be until you're back on your feet," he said. He ran his thumb over her cheek, wiping away her tears. "Don't even think of refusing."

She nodded, unable to say anything. He pushed her back towards the car. She sat in it, the door still open so he could talk to her.

"Go tell your kids. I'll be over tonight to help you start packing," he said before shutting the door.

She started the engine. He waved her off as she drove towards the hospital. Her mind was a mass of thoughts, all swirling and insistent. Hopper was at the forefront of her mind. He always came to her rescue. How could she ever repay him?

He turned up after dark. Both Joyce and Jonathan were home for once, having decided Will would be okay of one night. Joyce was at the kitchen table, cigarette in hand. Hopper walked in, not bothering with knocking. In his hands were unfolded boxes.

"I thought these might be useful," he said, putting them on the table and taking out his own cigarettes. He lit one and sat beside her.

"I can't believe that dickhead is kicking us out," she growled. "He must have heard Will gets out in two days and he still does this."

Hopper laid one of his hands over hers, covering it completely. It was so small and delicate beneath his and he swore he'd do anything to protect her.

"Where should we start?" he asked.

"Hop, you really don't have to do this," she said.

"You have no where else to go. Let me help," he replied. "How about we give Jonathan some boxes to start packing up his stuff and then work on the kitchen?"

While she was down the hall talking to Jonathan Hopper looked around the kitchen. He began opening cupboards and drawers, looking for things that wouldn't be needed for the next few days. He folded up a box and began to fill it with various things he found, assuming Joyce would join him to tell him what he was doing wrong. After half an hour without the return of Joyce he turned to look for her. He eventually found her in her room, sitting on the bed surrounded by clothes. She was holding a shirt in her hands, silent tears streaming down her face.

"Joyce?" he said, alerting her to his present.

She started and looked up at him, hurriedly wiping away the tears. She gave him a watery smile, putting the shirt down.

"Sorry," she said. "Thought I'd get a start on my wardrobe."

"Do you need a hand?" he asked.

"No, I... I'm fine," she settled on. She got up from the bed and brushed past him as she walked back into the kitchen. "What are we going to do with the furniture?"

"I could rent some storage space," he offered.

"You're doing more than enough. I can cover storage space," she said.

"I'll call a mover tomorrow."

Hopper watched this tiny woman, delicate and vulnerable, and thought she was probably the strongest person he'd ever met. It was amazing she hadn't buckled under the weight of everything yet. He watched her survey the room; the painted letters on the wallpaper, the boards covering the hole in the front wall, the reams of christmas lights stacked on the floor. Despite everything she still stood up straight as if she wasn't carrying all the worry she did.

They moved in Friday night. They'd emptied out the house, Jonathan and Joyce working hard to get everything into boxes and suitcases. Hopper would drive over every night to move some of it to his place, helping as much as he could around his shifts.

Will had been brought home the day before to say goodbye to the house he'd known since birth. He didn't seem to be all that sad but sometimes it was hard to tell. His trip into the Upside Down had caused him to shut himself off. He wasn't the same kid.

The three of them stood in the living room of Hopper's home,

displaced and unhappy. He'd just gotten off work and was standing to the side, not really sure what to say. The family stared around the room, now cluttered with boxes, still a bit of a wreck from his desperate search for bugs.

"Where are we going to sleep?" Will asked, voicing Joyce's thoughts.

"The couch pulls out into a bed. I was thinking you boys could take that and your mother could take my bed," Hopper explained.

"What about you?" Joyce asked.

"I'll set up something on the floor," he replied, shrugging.

"Don't be ridiculous. We've invaded your house, I'm not letting you sleep on the floor. You keep your bed, I'll manage on the floor," Joyce argued.

"No you won't. Honestly, Joyce, it's no bother," he said. She crossed her arms.

"Why can't you both sleep in the bed?" Will asked, looking between the two of them.

"Yeah, Mom, it's not like it's a single bed," Jonathan added, raising an eyebrow. Hopper and Joyce looked at each other.

"If you're comfortable with that," Hopper said.

"Fine, fine, I can see I won't win with you three ganging up on me," she said, putting her hands up in surrender.

"Great, we're going to get started on dinner," Jonathan said, pushing Will towards the kitchen.

Hopper opened his mouth to say something to them but they'd already disappeared. He looked blankly at Joyce who smiled at him.

"If you're really not okay sharing a bed," he began.

"Don't." She put a hand up to stop him. "It'll be fine."

They ate dinner on the couch. The tv was still in need of repairs so they talked and told stories, a warm, happy atmosphere surrounding them. When it came time for bed Jonathan pulled the bed out while Hopper hunted down some extra blankets and pillows.

Joyce was in the bathroom, changing into her pyjamas and brushing her teeth. She took a deep breath. Sharing a bed with Hopper would be okay, it wouldn't be the first time. It wasn't like they were strangers.

She entered his bedroom, pulling on the hem of her shirt. He stood there, a shirt in his hands. Her breath caught in her throat at the sight of his exposed chest. He pulled the shirt over his head, giving her a smirk.

"Which side of the bed do you want?" he asked.

“What?” She shook her head.

“To sleep.”

“Oh, um, the right I guess,” she replied. She sat on the edge of the bed as Hopper immediately got under the covers.

“You sure you’re alright?” he asked her.

“Yeah, I’m fine.”

She got under the covers, curling up on her side so her back was facing Hopper. Her arms curled around herself and she stared into the blackness. The moon was just bright enough for her eyes to see the outlines of the other furniture in the room.

“What are we going to do Hop?” she whispered.

“You’re going to sleep. You’ll stay here a while and then find a place to live and move out,” he replied.

She could hear Will and Jonathan talking in the other room, their voices drifting through the open door. She could feel Hopper shifting around in the bed behind her. His hand touched her shoulder and she turned to look at him.

“I won’t let anything happen to you,” he said. She smiled at him and turned back over. She listened through the night as her boys went quiet and Hopper’s breathing evened out. Soon the normal sounds of the night were the only things she could hear.

Joyce awoke to the feeling of a heavy arm draped across her waist. She blinked the sleep from her eyes, then buried her head in her pillow from the brightness. A deep sleepy chuckle came from beside her and the arm tightened.

“Hopper, what are you doing?” Her voice was muffled.

“I was sleeping but someone woke me up,” he replied. His voice was gravely from sleep and it sent a shiver down her spine.

“And what’s this?” she asked, tapping the appendage around her.

“My arm.”

“And it’s holding me because?”

“You move in your sleep. It keeps you still,” he replied. She could hear the smirk in his voice. She rolled her eyes and sat up, his arm slipping off her. She looked towards the door. No sounds were coming from the other room, the boys presumably taking advantage of the weekend and sleeping in. Hopper sat up beside her.

“What’s wrong?” he asked.

“Nothing.” She shook her head, still looking out the door.

“Joyce,” he began before being interrupted by her lips. It was quick

and chaste, no more than a friendly kiss. He looked like a deer caught in headlights after it and she laughed. He growled and pulled her back in for another kiss, longer and deep, his tongue plunging the depths of her mouth. The laugh quickly turned into a moan, her hands clutching his shirt.

He pulled away from her to study her face. Her eyes were closed and she was panting slightly, lips apart and inviting. She blinked her eyes open and smiled at him again.

"And that was for?" he asked.

"I wanted to say thank you," she replied, her hand brushing over the stubble on his cheek.

"Consider your debt repaid." He swooped in for another kiss. "Not that you had one."

She could hear the beginnings of her boys waking up in the next room, shuffling and whispered voices. She pushed against Hopper's chest and he let her go, sighing.

"We should get up," she said. He watched her climb out of the bed. She paused at the door and looked back at him with a quirked eyebrow.

"I could get used to this," he told her. She smiled and disappeared around the corner. He listened to the family in the other room and smiled to himself. He could definitely get used to this.